



**TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**  
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BRYAN DANIEL  
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the Public  
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GREG ABBOTT  
Governor

August 25, 2020

Mr. Jody Barr  
KXAN  
908 W. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Barr:

Thank you for your comments during the public comment portion of the August 20 commission meeting. Unfortunately, the prescribed format for receiving public comments doesn't provide an opportunity for detailed discourse; and I wanted to be sure to address the important issues you raised. The questions you asked were as follows:

1. Why are people still unable to contact TWC call centers to have their unemployment problems taken care of;
2. Is there no other answer than to just keep calling (the call centers);
3. Why does it take upward of 3 months for an appeal to be heard; and
4. Do you find it acceptable that people are still have issues contacting the TWC?

With regard to your first two questions concerning making contact with TWC, there are a number of ways to contact the agency to file an unemployment claim, or to seek additional information. Our online tools are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Nearly 87 percent of all initial claims are processed online. In addition to our web presence, we have deployed a chatbot on our website to answer common, specific questions about the claims process. This chatbot also provides an option for a TWC customer to leave a call back number; and we have deployed personnel to handle these outbound calls. Additionally, we have customer service representatives to take phone calls from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. daily. Last week, those customer service representatives spoke with more than 214,000 individuals and TWC processed more than 113,000 initial claims for unemployment benefits and more than 900,000 individual payments. There continues to be peak times during the day when our 1500 operators are engaged at capacity, and the average length of a call exceeds 13 minutes. We have conducted 4.4 million phone calls since March and continue to look for ways to enhance our ability to provide assistance in this manner.

With the exponential increase in claims, the number of appeals has increased in a corresponding manner. TWC has experienced a 1,500 percent increase in the number of appeals filed weekly. As with our call centers, we have added both internal and contract personnel to manage the workload. The current timeframe to process an appeal is 45-60 days. This represents a 150 percent increase from this time last year.

In the course of asking your questions, you mentioned 111 people who asked for your help in contacting TWC. We contacted everyone on your list in the 72 hours following receipt and reported the results from those calls to you in an August 19 email you received from Margaret Hession.

With regard to your final question, I do not find it an acceptable business practice for anyone to have difficulties receiving assistance from our agency. We will continue to adapt our systems to ensure that does not happen in the future. In the meantime, we continue to address issues on a case by case basis to ensure we are able to provide assistance to all eligible individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B".

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Bryan Daniel  
Chairman